

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources

--

OPENING REMARKS AFICS/NEW YORK ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

New York, 29 May 2019

Dear Mr. Dietz, President of AFICS/New York, Mr. Kwabena Osei-Danquah, Chef de Cabinet, Office of the President of the 73rd General Assembly,

Members of the AFICS/New York Annual Assembly,

Honorable former staff members of the United Nations System,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor for me to speak with you today at the AFICS/NY 49th Annual Assembly.

I would like to update you on the progress made following the approval by the General Assembly of the **Secretary-General's management reform**. In the first quarter of 2019, the new Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC) and the new Department of Operational Support (DOS) have worked collaboratively with multiple partners to make management reform a reality, moving the Organization towards being more efficient, agile, innovative, transparent and accountable.

In DMSPC, the Office of Human Resources (OHR) is involved in **implementation of the reform** which includes supporting and strengthening delegated decision-making and sub-delegation for human resources; organizational performance and accountability; the Human Resources Strategy and the simplification of a field-focused management policy framework; organizational standards of conduct and ethics, conduct and discipline and civility;

stakeholder engagement; a *United for Reform* learning strategy; and support to the other reform pillars.

AFICS is an important partner and stakeholder in the reform implementation process. The invaluable knowledge and wealth of expertise possessed by the members of the association is crucial in strengthening and modernizing the fabric of the international civil service.

Your voice has been heard on a number of important issues over the years, and we count on you to continue to voice your concerns and to provide your valuable feedback.

The Office of Human Resources continues to count on AFICS members to support several initiatives. To name a few:

- **Duty of Care**

In fulfilling the organizational mandates, the UN continues to aim to provide a healthy, safe and respectful working environment that promotes greater accountability, efficiency and commitment of its workforce. We are expanding Duty of Care to all environments and to all personnel, developing a risk management framework, and monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Duty of Care action points for high-risk duty stations. The Duty of Care Core Principles are being prepared to provide a guide to articulate the overarching and value-based UN System vision through a holistic, systems and risk management approach.

- **Staff Health and Well-Being**

The UN Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy was launched last October by the Secretary-General. The Strategy is a five-year approach to address the needs of all UN personnel and improve organizational capacities to prevent and protect mental health. It applies to the whole UN system and has been endorsed by all UN system entities. While there has been significant and ongoing investment in mental health and well-being, there is still a long way to go in addressing the needs of the United Nations workforce.

- **Disability Inclusion**

The UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) is a comprehensive strategy to ensure that the UN System is “fit for purpose” in relation to disability inclusion. It provides a foundation for sustainable and transformative progress on disability inclusion through all pillars of the UN’s work. It includes a system-wide policy, and an accountability framework with other implementation modalities. The policy establishes the highest levels of commitment and a vision for the UN system on disability inclusion for the next decade. It will establish an institutional framework for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, among other international human rights instruments and development and humanitarian commitments.

- **Accessibility**

The core concept of the UN policy on employment and accessibility for staff members with disabilities is the reasonable accommodation provided to staff members with disabilities to remove workplace barriers to enable them to effectively perform their official functions. The accessibility and reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities is high on the Chief Executives Board HR Network agenda.

The General Assembly welcomed efforts by the Organization to improve accessibility of UN premises and conferences and to provide reasonable accommodation in the workplace, including for recruitment, and encouraged organizations to continue to improve accessibility. UN Management takes full inclusion and accessibility for persons with disabilities seriously and has made progress in this area although work is underway to continue making the Organization more accessible.

- **Geographical Diversity and Outreach**

The diversity and complexity of the global United Nations presence must be matched by a diverse, geographically balanced, gender-balanced, international and multitalented workforce that is truly representative of,

and benefits, all the peoples that the Organization serves through a strong sense of duty and purpose to uphold the values on which the United Nations was built and for which it stands. These principles are embedded in our Charter and have been repeatedly emphasized in multiple resolutions of the General Assembly. Since taking office, the Secretary-General has made gender parity and geographical and regional diversity key elements of his overall reforms. OHR supports offices, departments and missions in achieving this diversity, including reaching youth, through innovative outreach initiatives.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would also like to take the opportunity to inform you of the outcome of the **Staff-Management Committee (SMC) Annual meeting** which took place in April 2019, in which it was agreed regarding the **Health and Life Insurance Committee (HLIC)**

- a) To the following:
 1. To establish a **NY Health Plans Insurance Committee** to cover the NY plans only (Aetna, Empire, HIP and CIGNA Dental). There would be five members on this Committee representing the Secretary-General (including from separately administered funds and programmes participating in the plans) and five representatives of staff nominated by the NY UNSU and the separately administered funds and programmes participating in the plans.
 2. To establish a **UN Secretariat Medical Insurance Plan (MIP) Committee** to cover the UN Secretariat MIP Plan. There would be five members on this Committee representing the Secretary-General and five representatives of staff nominated by the Staff-Management Committee (SMC).
 3. To remove from the Terms of Reference of the current HLIC, the NY Health Insurance Plans and the linkage to the NY Joint Negotiation Committee (JNC). The Committee would continue to cover the CIGNA worldwide health insurance plan for internationally-recruited staff members not based in NY

and the Global Group Life Insurance (GLI) plan for all staff members. Five members representing the Secretary-General and five representatives of staff nominated by the staff representatives in the SMC (including from separately administered funds and programmes participating in the plans).

- b) That management will circulate the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the three committees for further consultation as soon as possible in order to ensure that the proposal will address the concerns raised by staff.
- c) That members of the committees will be nominated after finalization of the ToR.

The staff representatives also took the time at the annual SMC meeting last month to give their thanks for all the efforts made by the Pension Fund to resolve the backlog crisis. I understand Ms. Dunn Lee, the Acting Chief Executive Officer for the Pension Fund will be fully briefing you on the Fund later this afternoon.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you, also on behalf of the Secretary-General, for your continued support to achieving the goals of the Organization.

The Organization values your interaction and is committed to meeting regularly with your leadership to discuss issues that are of concern to you.

Rest assured that we will always be open to hearing the concerns of AFICS/New York and committed to working together to find solutions.

Thank you very much.